

A Supplement to the Christianity on Campus Panel Discussion

We understand that we are limited by time in answering questions, so we have compiled a list of answers to common questions that face Christians today. We panelists are not trained debaters; we are believers speaking from our hearts and our experiences. We highly encourage you to read the Bible for yourself to and see whether these things are true. If you have further questions, or would like to meet any of us, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Why Do You Believe the Bible?...Isn't It Just an Outdated Book?

The Bible is God's personal love letter to individuals. He, as God, could have communicated with humanity in any number of ways imaginable. He could write in the clouds if He wanted to! However, He chose to communicate with us through the vehicle of the written word. We believe the Word of God to be accurate. God's Word says that He cannot lie, and that He makes sure His Word is protected and completely accurate. Consider the following evidence regarding the validity of the Bible:

- **Historically:** The most accurate work of all antiquity, with 24,000 copies of manuscripts preserved...next closest is Homer's *Iliad* at 643 copies.
- **Uniformity:** 66 books by 40+ authors on 3 continents, written over 1600+ years, completely unified in its teachings.
- **Archeology:** The Bible has been used as a guide to help archeologists know what to look for and where to dig for it. <http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2008/05/What-is-the-importance-of-the-Dead-Sea-Scrolls.aspx>
- **Prophecy:** 300 prophecies+ concerning Christ fulfilled to 100% accuracy.
- **Experientially:** The transformations in our own personal lives and countless lives through the centuries.

The Bible, although debated through the ages, has yet to be proven inaccurate in any area of study.

Isn't Religion, Especially Christianity, a Cause of All the Wars?

We as Christian believers will be the first to admit that horrible acts have been perpetrated in the name of Christ. If the leaders of such movements practiced what they claimed to believe, the Word of God, then we would not be having this discussion today. Nevertheless, the assumption that religion started all the wars is completely false.

This document was prepared by Joseff Smith with contributions from Laura Emerson, Rebekah Feller, Takashi Nishiyama, Stephen O'Riley, Carole Pelttari, Aaron Smith, and Jie Zhang as a supplement to the following presentation.

Pelttari, C., & Zhang, J. (2012). A multiethnic panel discusses Christianity on campus. Brockport, NY, September 20, 2012. 12th Annual Diversity Conference at The College at Brockport State University of New York. Panelists: Melissa Browning, Debra Joseph-McEwen, MoonSun Kim, Dianne Moultrie, Stephen O'Riley, Carole Pelttari, and Jie Zhang. Page 1 of 4

Why are Christians Hateful?

The term, Christian, means “like Christ.” In a sentence, those who claim to be Christian and are hateful are not Christ-like at all. Jesus told His followers we could fulfill the entire law by following two commands: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength; the second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27).

Sometimes Christians are seen as hateful for standing against what God says is wrong. Out of love, He corrects and draws lines of what is acceptable and what is not, like a parent who warns a child. God wants what He knows is best, but He allows us to make our own choices. Believers accept God’s sovereignty and definitions of sin. Sin is a violation of who He is. Sin is treason against His nature, and it is destructive and harmful for all involved. To appease the Righteous Nature of God, due to the sin that required justice, Christ took all sin upon Himself, giving His life through death on a cross. What love! Christ invites all who have broken His laws to enter into relationship with Him by accepting the penalty He paid for them. “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

During His life on earth, Christ was known as a “friend of sinners” because He made Himself available to all. His harshest words were directed to the religious crowd (who were also sinners... whether they openly confessed it or not) whose sin of pride kept them from submitting to the righteousness of God through Christ. Christ was buffeted, stripped, beaten, flogged, whipped, crucified, and He did it for people who hated Him, and He did it out of love for those people, He did it for us.

If God is Good and All-Powerful, Why is There Suffering?

Make no mistake, suffering exists in the world, and God is good. According to scripture, God created a perfect world without suffering, and according to scripture, it will be that way again in Heaven. So what happened in between the beginning and the end?

God created us with free will; we are not puppets without choice. People, acquiescing to Satan, sinned, bringing pain and suffering into the world. We live in a broken world; therefore, broken things happen. In addition to sin and free will, God sometimes **allows** suffering because HE has a greater plan.

According to the American Center for Law and Justice, Christians comprise 74% of all individuals that are persecuted for their faith worldwide on a daily basis. - <http://aclj.org/nadarkhani>

- 200 million+ Christians are persecuted every day - Voice of the Martyrs. -

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2011/09/137_95722.html

<http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/290498/global-persecution-christians-conrad-black#>

He often uses suffering to lead us to Him (Jeremiah 12:14-16). Suffering was experienced by our Lord and all the apostles (Hebrews 2:9-10, 2 Corinthians 4:8-10), and they promised we would also suffer (John 15:18-21, 1Peter 4:12-19). Of course, Jesus also told us we would be victorious because He is (John 16:33).

John 16:33 Jesus says: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." "...in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Romans 8:37).

God didn't promise that life would be easy, but He did promise that He would be with us through it all. God does not enjoy suffering or seeing people suffer (John 11:35); but He suffered on the cross so He could bring us ultimate relief as well as His presence, strength, and peace regardless of our earthly circumstances.

This document was prepared by Joseff Smith with contributions from Laura Emerson, Rebekah Feller, Takashi Nishiyama, Stephen O'Riley, Carole Pelttari, Aaron Smith, and Jie Zhang as a supplement to the following presentation.

Pelttari, C., & Zhang, J. (2012). A multiethnic panel discusses Christianity on campus. Brockport, NY, September 20, 2012. 12th Annual Diversity Conference at The College at Brockport State University of New York. Panelists: Melissa Browning, Debra Joseph-McEwen, MoonSun Kim, Dianne Moultrie, Stephen O'Riley, Carole Pelttari, and Jie Zhang. Page 2 of 4

Why Do You Speak of God as a Male?

Christians speak of God as a male for many reasons. Jesus took on human form in a male body, is the Son of God, and He invited us to address God as "Our Father." However, consider the following:

- **God the Father is a Spirit:** according to scripture, neither male nor female, and we are told to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.
- **Made in His image:** Scripture says that God created man in His own image. God made Adam and then made Eve. The word woman literally means "of man." Men and Women are made in God's image because both originate from God's Design. Neither sex has superiority over the other.
- **Scripture Refers** to God as a He, Him, and Father. A few scriptures, describing the love of God, describe God as a loving mother hen who gathers and protects her chicks. God's range of love has no bounds. He is not limited to emotional range as humans. Jeremiah 31:3 says, "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."

The fact that God is described as a male, and shown through the person of Christ as a male, does not mean He loves or prefers either sex over the other: "So Peter opened his mouth and said: 'Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him'" (Acts 10:34-35 ESV). Christ came to die for all.

What's Wrong with Everyone Having Their Own Beliefs?

God gave us free will, and all people everywhere are free to accept or deny Him. When two belief systems contradict, each person must determine what he or she will believe. The one who cares about knowing truth will not rest until he or she has found it apart from other people's opinions. The reality is that we each die, and something happens. So, the question becomes, Is Jesus who He said he was? (See the next question/answer.)

Why Do You Say Christianity is the Only Way to God?

Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Was Jesus right? Is there any other way to God? We're left with 3 choices as we consider Jesus' statement. C. S. Lewis summarized it this way a half century ago: either Jesus was a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord. Either He was not telling the truth, He was mentally insane, claiming to be God, or He was/is telling the truth.

This document was prepared by Joseff Smith with contributions from Laura Emerson, Rebekah Feller, Takashi Nishiyama, Stephen O'Riley, Carole Pelttari, Aaron Smith, and Jie Zhang as a supplement to the following presentation.

Pelttari, C., & Zhang, J. (2012). A multiethnic panel discusses Christianity on campus. Brockport, NY, September 20, 2012. 12th Annual Diversity Conference at The College at Brockport State University of New York. Panelists: Melissa Browning, Debra Joseph-McEwen, MoonSun Kim, Dianne Moultrie, Stephen O'Riley, Carole Pelttari, and Jie Zhang. Page 3 of 4

We're So Small in this Universe, Why do You Say God Cares about Individuals?

- **God Proved It:** God's Words (Scripture) and Actions (Sacrifice of Son, Jesus) proclaim His love for you! Have you read them?
- **You are Unique:** God's Word in Jeremiah 1:4-5 says that God knew you before He formed you in your mother's womb. From the print of your fingertips, to the scans of your eyes, to the DNA that you carry, you are a one and only. The probability that your DNA structure ended up as it is now, is 1 in the trillions! There is nobody else like you, and God has a plan that is as unique as you!
- **God Has a Plan** for your life that is as unique as you are: Eph 2:10 "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Jeremiah 29:11 also states that God has plans to give you hope and a future.

Each of us on the panel has a unique story about the way God's call broke into our lives, inviting us into relationship with Him. The door is open to all who will listen and respond to His call. (John 10:9, Luke 15:10).

How Can I Be Sure I've Become a Christian?

God knew that mankind would fall to sin through Adam. Because of this sin, all men became sinners. Before that ever happened, God planned on a way to reconcile the sinfulness of man to Himself. This had to be done because God is righteous and holy and cannot allow wickedness to coexist with His righteousness (what kind of judge would He be if He could allow it? Not a righteous one). Because of this, God first had to reconcile His justice and the sin of man. This was done through the Cross of Jesus Christ at Calvary. Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be reconciled to God. 1 Corinthians 1:30 states: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption..." Because of Jesus, we can be right with God! We can be forgiven of our sin. That's what Christianity is: believing on Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, to take our punishment that we may be saved and spend eternity with Him in God's Kingdom. God wants all people everywhere to turn from sin and to God. Romans 10:9 say if we confess Jesus as Lord and believe that God raised Him from the dead, we are saved. When we accept His sacrifice and turn from sin, our lives are transformed (2 Corinthians 5:17). He'll cause us to desire to please Him, love His Word, love His people, and love other people.

"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, he was buried, he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.
After that he appeared to more than five hundred" (1Corinthians 15:3-6)

This document was prepared by Joseff Smith with contributions from Laura Emerson, Rebekah Feller, Takashi Nishiyama, Stephen O'Riley, Carole Pelttari, Aaron Smith, and Jie Zhang as a supplement to the following presentation.

Pelttari, C., & Zhang, J. (2012). A multiethnic panel discusses Christianity on campus. Brockport, NY, September 20, 2012. 12th Annual Diversity Conference at The College at Brockport State University of New York. Panelists: Melissa Browning, Debra Joseph-McEwen, MoonSun Kim, Dianne Moultrie, Stephen O'Riley, Carole Pelttari, and Jie Zhang. Page 4 of 4